because I had been compelled to give way about a traditional " gag " in the church scene, with which we ended the fourth act. In my own production we had scorned this gag, and let the curtain come down on Benedick's line : " Go, comfort your cousin ; I must say she is dead, and so farewell.'' When I was told that we were to descend to the buffoonery of:

> *Beatrice .•* Benedick, kill him—Mil him if you can,
> *Benedick :* As sure as I'm alive, I will !

I protested, and implored Henry not to do it. He said that it was necessary : otherwise the " curtain " would be received in dead silence. I assured him that we had often had seven and eight calls without it. I used every argument, artistic and otherwise. Henry, according to his custom, was gentle, would not discuss it much, but remained obdurate. After holding out for a week, I gave in. " It's my duty to obey your orders, and do it," I said, " but I do it under protest." Then I burst into tears. It was really for his sake just as much as for mine. I thought it must bring such disgrace on him ! Looking back on the incident, I find that the most humorous thing in connection with it was that the critics, never reluctant to accuse Henry of " monkeying " with Shakespeare if they could find cause, never noticed the gag at all!

Such disagreements occurred very seldom. In "The Merchant of Venice " I found that Henry Irving's Shylock necessitated an entke revision of rny conception of Portia,

especially in the trial scene, but here there was no point of honour involved. I had considered, and still am of the same mind, that Portia in the trial scene ought to be very *quid. I* saw an extraordinary effect in this ^uietness. But as Henry's Shylock was quiet, I had to give it up. His heroic saint was splendid, but it wasn't good for Portia.